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VATICAN II — TEN YEARS LATER

THE MAKING OF A DISSIDENT

JOHN B. MANNION

CORRESPONDENCE

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NOVAK CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS
FIGURES & FETUSES:
UBELL, NEUHAUS & NIXON

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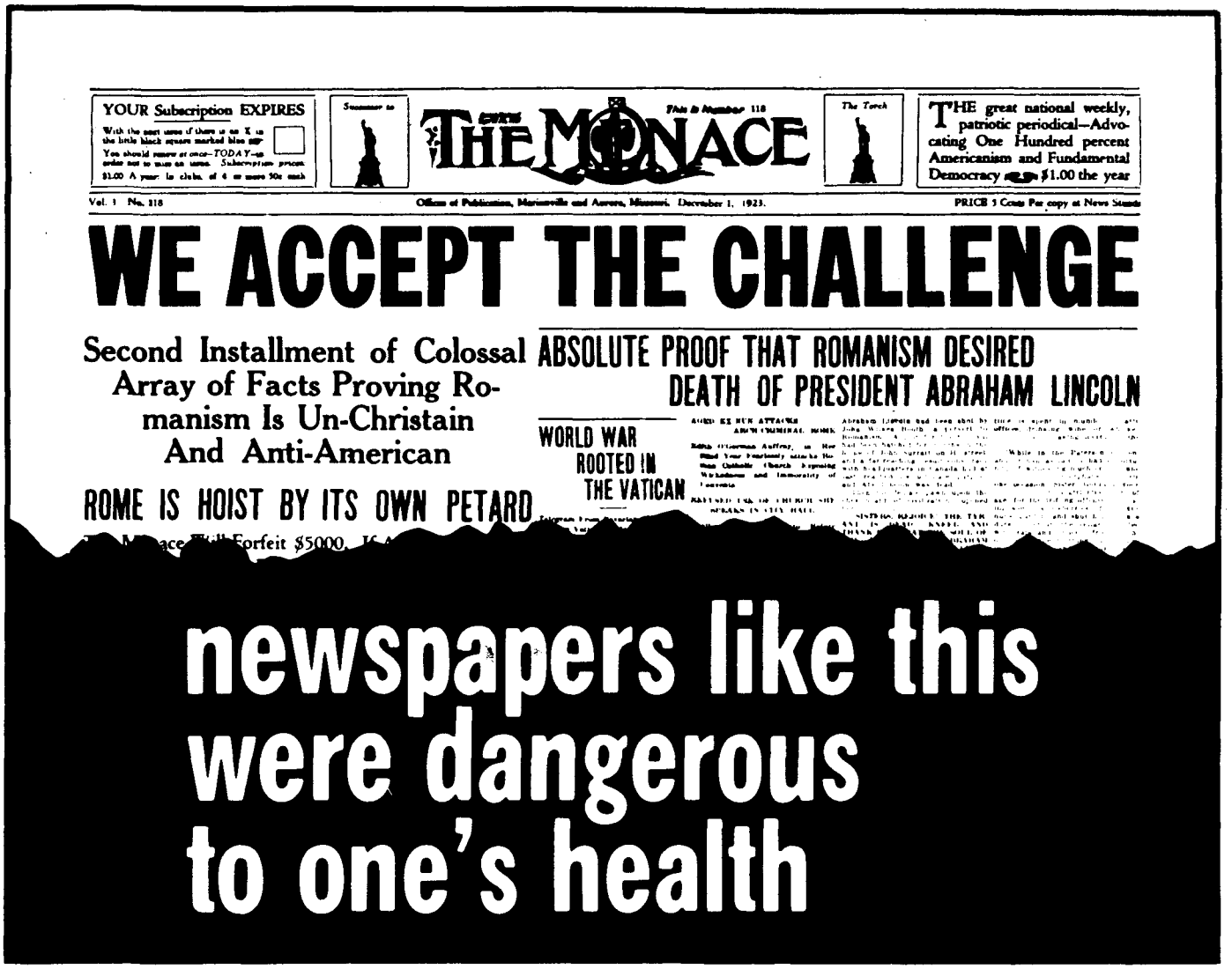

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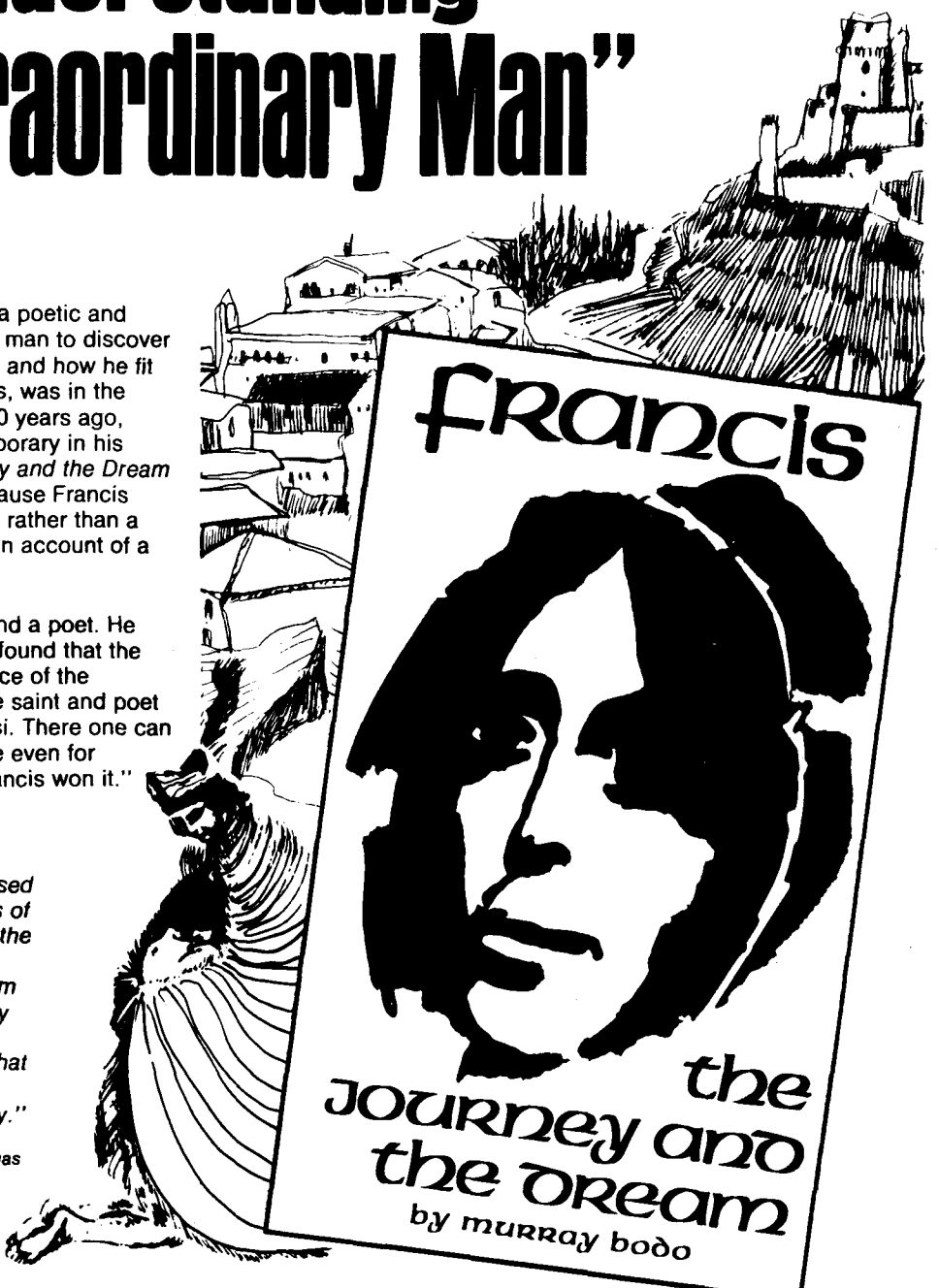

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The Novak Majority

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: Michael Novak's concern for the white ethnic American has never quite established itself as an intelligible issue to those intellectuals and media people who were born and raised ethnic and who, presumably, are in a position to force a shift in national consciousness.

He blames the new Left for overemphasizing the plight of the Blacks and Chicanos, while at the same time apparently holding the white ethnic majority in contempt.

Where does Mr. Novak, in his attempt to solve the whole problem, publish the other side of the question? Where does he publish articles telling his friends, the former peasants, to get off their intellectual asses and do as the Blacks have been doing these many years—meaning, that after they, the Blacks, work the same, long, oppressive, back-breaking days as the Polish, Italian, and Slavic Americans (or doesn't Mr. Novak think they work as hard?) they still manage to forge ahead with a dynamic new identity for themselves and for all of us in politics, the arts, the theater, the media, in the social sciences, in religion, as well as finding time to learn their own history and preserve their own roots, the white intellectual and the Anglo-Saxon be damned. Nobody's helping the Blacks. They've been helping the rest of us, particularly us ethnics, out of a thousand-year-old death. Who's kidding who? Lets give them credit and do likewise. Put up or shut up.

ANTHONY SCULLY

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: When Michael Novak starts his "centrist" Christian Democrat party [Dec. 15], I assume he will have either the Rev. Dr. Billy Graham or Cardinal Krol as national chairman. Or perhaps he can persuade the Rev. Charles Coughlin to come out of retirement.

JOHN DUNN

Philadelphia, Pa.

To the Editors: It is sad to see Michael Novak a sponsor of an Unholy Alliance like "The Coalition for a Democratic Majority," and expounding its philosophy in *Commonweal,* [Dec. 15]. The sponsors of the Coalition include a substantial number of super-Hawk devotees of the Vietnam war and the "defense" establishment (Arnold Beichman, Paul Seabury, Eugene Rostow, John P. Roche, among others), and a membership notable for hostility toward the young and to any serious challenges to the status quo. The sponsors of the Coalition openly prefer Nixon to McGovern, the former having "usurped in some measure" the "Democratic traditions" denied by McGovern and the New Politics (ad in *New York Times,* Dec. 7, 1972, p. 14). When we consider Nixon's Vietnam policies, his clear position on military versus social expenditures, his attitudes toward tax reform, his policies on civil liberties, urban problems, education, and cultural matters, and his handling of the race question, the underlying values of Novak and the Coalition shine through their sophistry (analyzed in part below) with depressing clarity.

In his *Commonweal* article Novak does not discuss foreign or military policies, but we must presume that he finds these adequately described as "sober and spirited" in the Coalition ad to which he attached his name, and that he approves the Kennedy-Johnson "tradition" in which some $460 billion, or 80 percent of federal purchases of goods and services during their tenure, went to the military establishment. Is this what Democrats should "Come Home" to, Michael? Novak asserts that Humphrey beat McGovern "in the one TV market he had money for." He fails to mention how Humphrey played up the defense cut and insecurity scare—but presumably this is not unprincipled opportunism, merely recognition of a "Great Democratic tradition." Presumably, also, McGovern's refusal to play that game was another instance of "moral arrogance" (a pet Novak phrase), definable in the context as "adherence to ethical standards that I am prepared to disregard."

In lieu of serious discussion of substantive issues, Novak and the Coalition resort to various forms of *ad hominem* attack and straw men. One long-standing favorite is that spokesmen for the New Politics (anonymous and homogeneous) are "elitists," trying to impose their own special views on others and contemptuous of the citizenry and "organized labor" (read: George Meany and his associated anti-elitists). Any outsider and idealist still in process of winning acceptance is, in a sense, trying to "impose" his views on others (e.g., Jesus Christ, Tom Paine, William Lloyd Garrison), but is it not intellectually and morally bankrupt to focus on the minority status and rejection of an idea or program as proof of elitism and moral arrogance? There is no evidence that spokesmen for the New Politics have believed in their own views more strongly than Novak, Podhoretz, or Rostow, or that they have used methods less scrupulous than other contesting groups. (In fact, a good case can be made for greater scrupulosity.)

Curiously, Meany, Daley, Humphrey and Nixon are not criticized as "elitists" by Novak and the Coalition, although they fit the concept in an obvious and clear sense, as members of a small politico-economic elite that has been able to monopolize political power, implement its own vision, and manipulate consent (or simply ignore mass disapproval). Could it be that they are not placed in that category because they are members of *established* elites, representing power and policies approved by Novak and his associates? In my *New American Imperial Dictionary* I define "elitism" in accordance with the conception reflected in the Novak usage: "Individual and small group challenges to the views and policies of established power groups and ruling elites. (See further, 'Irresponsible,' and 'Conspiracy.')." I submit that this definition is an excellent fit.

Another Novak-Coalition device is

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simple transference. The idea that "race" was important in the recent election Novak says is "divisive, destructive and morally arrogant." Eventually Novak even says that it is untrue, but he quickly contradicts himself when acknowledging that racism "is our inheritance. Overcoming it is not easy, . . ." He then proceeds to psychologize about the unconscious racism of the Left, which turns out to be the only racism that Novak can deal with explicitly! The evidence that fear of Blacks in schools, jobs and residential areas has once again become a powerful political force is overwhelming, but Novak cannot incorporate this into his analysis as it would require admission of a serious flaw in the values of mainstream America, and would help sustain the hypothesis that the Nixon victory and the defeat of the New Politics was discreditable to the majority, and to the Democratic Establishment which contributed so much to this result. Reality being inadmissible to Novak he must deny it, putting in its place a victimized, misunderstood, good and non-racist mass, a benign Establishment, and a nefarious New Politics. As one might expect, mythology plus transference yields total muddle.

The racial facts of America suggest that what is really "divisive and destructive" is the willingness of a Nixon, a Wallace, and even a Humphrey to play up and exacerbate these sick elements in "our inheritance." It is to his great credit that McGovern was totally incapable of catering to racism. But instead of gaining support for this from the Coalition, this turns out to be further proof of his "moral arrogance." Instead of rage and hostility toward a Nixon, unscrupulously furthering "our inheritance," Novak and his colleagues engage in word play over "elitism" and the unconscious racism of the Left. In the process, of course, they rationalize their own *de facto* acquiescence in a brazenly racist policy and assure that racism will be preserved and fostered. They also assure that the "saving rem-

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LOVING IT AND LEAVING IT

The church has fallen apart. Or, at least that is what we have been told. We read it in current best sellers, the op-ed pages of the *New York Times*, in much of the religious press and in our own pages—in articles and letters from our critics and friends.

There are several explanations for the alleged disintegration. According to one, belief depended on the preservation of the Hellenistic and European culture that, by either divine ordination or the accident of history, nurtured the church. The faith was a medieval tapestry in which every thread and every image were so intertwined and interrelated that once one thread was pulled the whole tapestry would unravel into a mess of strings. Thus, Virgin Birth, vigil lights, Jesus' resurrection, Saint Christopher, birth control, no meat on Friday, infallibility, the apparitions at Fatima, the missionaries in China, the permanence of both marriage and the religious vows, and the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist all assumed more or less equal importance in the hearts of ordinary believers—if not to the more sophisticated authorities and theologians. This picture assumes a static concept of the church, as if the national culture were a monastery, exempt from the challenges of history, and the believers were novice monks or nuns. Thus, those who didn't realize the church was a tapestry are responsible for its unraveling: the liturgical reformers, liberal journalists, and social activists tampered with holy things that seemed accidental but were really essential to belief, and the faith was lost.

In another explanation, what seemed to be faith was really only ignorance, naiveté and fear. The American church in particular, because it had expended all its energies trying to protect an immigrant faith from a hostile culture, treated its members as children right up to the middle of Vatican II. Catholics believed because they had been raised in a ghetto of other believers; but the cultural mores that supported that belief were not strong enough to withstand the public educational revolution that made Darwin, Freud, Marx, Dewey, the history of religion and the new scripture scholarship available to the world and even to Catholics.

Meanwhile, unrealistic expectations that "better" liturgies or improved catechetics would somehow transform the consciousness of a long-too-isolated and intellectually deprived community fell flat. And Rome's impotence became all the more apparent as the Pope squandered his moral power on *Humanae Vitae* yet could not bring himself to do much more

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than weep over the Vietnam war, the greatest moral crime of recent years.

There is truth in these analyses; and it is understandable that some good men who loved the church ten years ago have left it disillusioned—as illustrated by John B. Mannion's article in this issue. Yet, these explanations envision the church as embodied pre-eminently in its authorities, its bishops and bureaucrats, its cultural accidentals. What some have called the collapse of the church we would rather call its transformation. If we have been disillusioned, it is good that, like Luke's disciples on the road to Emmaus, we have been stripped of our illusions. We have learned painfully not to put our faith in the vitality of Catholic institutions, the permanence of Christian culture, or the efficacy of the liturgy—in Latin or in English—or the moral leadership of prudent bishops. After all, Christ never promised success as most Americans understand it. He promised the cross, a share in his cup of suffering, and his abiding presence as long as we gathered in his name and loved one another.

The church, therefore, is ourselves—good and bad, relevant and irrelevant—the community of those who try to remain committed to the message of Jesus. So, if the church in its members is ignorance and intellectual oppression, satin-slippered monsignori and pastors in Cadillacs on the way to the race track or golf course, it is also the Curé of Ars, and, in our own time—with all their faults—John XXIII, the Berrigans and Kennedys, Drinan, Dozier, Dorothy Day, and that unknown young man or woman in college or working in a factory, who wants to be better and sees in Jesus and his community a way to grow and serve. Leave this community and Christ remains an option; stay, and he remains a demand.

MR. SMITH STEPS DOWN

The resignation of Gerard C. Smith as director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency removes from public service a man of dedication and skill whose accomplishments are less appreciated now than they will come to be among generations of the future, if nuclear arms control and disarmament proceed to their logical end. As chief U.S. arms negotiator since 1969, Mr. Smith helped put together the Seabed Arms Control Treaty and the Nuclear Accident Agreement of 1971, the Bacteriological Weapons Convention of 1972, SALT-I and the Interim Agreement on Strategic Offensive Arms. With such earlier pacts as the Limited Test-Ban Treaty of 1963 and the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968, these accords comprise an impressive advance toward comprehensive arms control.

Of course, much remains to be negotiated before that blissful state of control is arrived at. Ideally, there should be a moratorium on further qualitative and quantitative strategic weapons' construction; an extension of the test-ban to cover all underground testing; a limitation on further missile flight testing; restrictions on certain anti-submarine warfare developments, and a reduction in the numbers of strategic nuclear delivery vehicles.

Ideally, too, efforts must be pressed to broaden negotiations beyond the U.S. and Russia. Nuclear development is unfortunately no longer at that stage where two nations can agree among themselves and settle problems for the world. U.S.-Russian accords will always be valuable in themselves and as patterns for wider pacts. However, the proliferation of nuclear powers has moved the world into a situation where bilateral negotiations must begin to give way to multilateral talks.

It is a disappointment to lose Gerard Smith at so crucial a time in the evolution of negotiations—the more so given reports that Mr. Nixon intends to downgrade the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and appoint a man not conspicuously identified with the concerns one would expect of an arms-control negotiator. Gerard Smith enjoyed a special rapport with the Russians, while possessing the imagination to forge real breakthroughs. If Mr. Nixon comes up with a lesser negotiator, the loss could be incalculable.

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Freedom for a Prisoner of History

As a prelude to the twelfth winter of our discontent over Vietnam, "the government" decided to be done with (for the moment) Peace Prisoner Phil Berrigan on December 20. In Danbury that day never dawned; instead, the darkness eroded into a misty gray twilight—a fitting backdrop for a semi-somber moment in the peace movement's eclectic history to date.

The prison, a sandstone monument to architectural unimaginativeness, lies about three miles beyond the town, hidden behind a barren hillock astride a pot-holed, two-lane strip of blacktop that masquerades as a state highway. The release was scheduled for 8:15 a.m., in the hope that crowds and media coverage would be minimized. Only the "accredited" press, including those with long-expired UN press cards, were admitted on the prison turf to await the eviction of #70173. His departure was delayed for an hour, due to the late arrival of Berrigan brothers Dan and Jerry, and Jerry's wife, Carol.

As Phil exited the front door more than a few of the media mob resorted to some "ideological plugola" by clapping, before rushing in to surround that evening's 1:30 package on the network news or the 40 lines in tomorrow's back pages. Up close one notices significant

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changes: the complexion is wan, the hands tired, and the facial lines more craggy than ever, like a weather-worn addition to Mt. Rushmore. But the eyes, they carry the new messages—chastened introspection, renewed dedication, increased compassion for his fellow sufferers. A few terse ripostes to some journalistic inanities (e.g., "How does it feel to be out of prison?"), a fond wave to his once (and future?) inmates and he was off down the hill to meet his friends.

Utilizing a portable loudspeaker he responded to the warmth of the chilblained crowd by bringing them greetings from the war-resisters still inside and expressing gratitude for "springing me out." Their tears of joy suffused into those of sadness as he recounted some of Howard Zinn's impressions upon meeting the young victims of the U.S. terror bombings during his visit to North Vietnam last month. Then off with the group on a mile walk to a local inn, which had made its facilities available after the local churches had refused even a stable.

The Amber Room is part of a roadhouse complex reminiscent of an early Richard Widmark movie or an earlier O'Hara novel. About 800 friends and federal agents "rejoice(d) in sorrow together," listening to Pete Seeger's minstreling and a rather unique liturgy which included readings from the writings of the Apostles, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and George Jackson. Some of the career pacifists really winced at the last. A pre-planned Baptism was canceled, due possibly to prison-inspired delays in outgoing mail. A brief but disturbing talk by Phil, an ecumenical Eucharist of freedom bread and wine, and most of the crowd was on its way.

In both the liturgical homily and the pseudo-event that passed for a press conference he stressed three major themes: prisons and prisoners, peace and perseverance. He argued that "man can transcend prison life," but prisons were excoriated as "laboratories of waste, injustice and desperation, outstanding examples of reciprocal revenge between society and the prisoner." In similar tones he castigated the onward march of political oppression in America, but he specifically noted that the situation was much worse for the people in the Soviet Union, Greece and South Vietnam. The message is certain not to be lost on the editors of the *Daily World* who were incensed awhile back about Dan's statements on the mistreatment of Russian intellectuals. Conversely, it didn't seem to go far enough for certain liberal purists, who would have been satisfied with nothing less than a total anathema for Angela Davis *et alia et opera-omnia.*

The issues of peace and perseverance were linked in a particularly poignant manner. He candidly confessed to the impotence of the peace movement in effecting an end to the war: "our powerlessness has been so amply and thoroughly demonstrated to us by the power of government." Despite this, he appealed anew for a rededication to integrity and truth in an active nonviolent way: "We are painfully learning that resistance depends on the spirit of resistance, which in turn depends on God. So let us go to God in a spirit of Advent, in a spirit of powerlessness and longing, in a realization of our need for all men and women in community, and in acceptance of the suffering and risk necessary to the truth we seek. Then perhaps there will be resistance and living alternatives to the death process."

Nine years ago, when Philip Berrigan was ordered off the plane at Atlanta on his way to a Freedom Ride in Jackson, he ceased to be a private person. He became, and remains, a prisoner of history. In that context he brought a fiery zeal to the peace forces, challenging along the way the sacred American myth that property is more important than human lives. In the process he has paid a terrible price. That amorphous mélange of ego anarchists known as the Catholic Left have been among his severest critics. One of them, Garry Wills, accused him in the wake of Harrisburg of doing "dumb things for peace," yet within three months of writing that statement Wills was arrested in a lie-in for peace at the entrance to the U.S. Senate. The Nixon government has maligned and slandered him, and is now trying to thrust him into the trash bin of history, on the premise that living relics are preferable to psychic martyrs.

Phil Berrigan is now free on parole, but it is evident that this eminently decent human being and committed cleric has some torturous soul-searching and decisions ahead, lest he become a permanent casualty of this mad war.

RICHARD H. MILLER

(*Richard H. Miller teaches U.S. Diplomatic History at Newton College.*)

COMING

GEORGE H. DUNNE writes about development, social justice and the Christian conscience:

"It was impossible for me then—as it is now—to reflect upon Christ's predilection for the poor, his warnings to the rich, his parable of the Good Samaritan, his commandments of love, his Sermon on the Mount, his at once terrifying and inspiring parable of judgment narrated in the 25th chapter of Matthew's Gospel, and much else besides, without seeing their bearing on a host of 'social subjects,' such as the sin of segregation, anti-Semitism, the migrant farm workers, the second-class citizenship of Latin Americans, rats in the tenements, racial ghettos, the *favelas* in Rio, the slums in Calcutta, the gap between rich and poor, property claims and human claims, war, violence, etc."

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THE MAKING OF A DISSIDENT

JOHN B. MANNION

Before the opening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962, Commonweal *published a series of articles on the general theme of "What the Layman Wants from the Church"—a series later issued in paperback by Herder and Herder under the title* The Layman in the Church. *Now we have invited the authors of that series to take another look at themselves and the post-conciliar church, their fears and disappointments, their hopes and expectations, all from the vantage point of today, ten years after the Council's inception. This is the third article in the series.*

—THE EDITORS

What fun to be invited to wax autobiographical! Ours is not to question the editors' judgment of reader interest. Down with qualms and reserve. Rake up the old coals and see what spark of interest may be left.

I haven't peeked at the article of ten years ago expressing my hopes for liturgical reform. Last fall I declined another opportunity to reread it when my wife insisted I do something about the four feet of personal files yellowing in the basement. They represented my thirteen years as a "professional Catholic": clippings, talks, articles, and private correspondence, 1954-1967. En route to the trash bin, they paid their past-due rent with four hours of laughs, nostalgia and sharp twinges of embarrassment; much more interesting than our earlier disposition of some twelve hundred books (after reserving about two hundred of "the more important, basic works" for some scholar of the year 2072 who will stumble upon this treasure at an auction of a great-grandchild's estate).

Anyway, the article of 1962 holds no interest for me now. I recall it was specific about a number of changes in the Mass, touted the vernacular, and I suppose it spoke of the underlying realities of the liturgy, calling for better education in such. And surely it was earnest. And prudent. Show the conservatives we're sound and reasonable. Don't alienate the skittish bishops, now that we want their votes.

Ten years later, ten years older, I couldn't care less. The urgent cause of liturgical reform which meant so much to me then means nothing to me now. Since the summer's end of 1967, the church has faded from my consciousness much as my years in the Army have. I remember good and bad about both periods and occasionally I get a kick out of reminiscing about improbable scenes and outrageous characters. But there's not much of an emotional bang attached to most of it. The first sergeant who delivered at the top of his lungs vivid mini-lectures on the horrors of VD to four hundred grumpy men shivering in the Rhineland dawn now shares a niche in my memory with the Southwestern bishop whose personal apostolate was jamming—with well masticated chewing gum—the coin slots of prophylactic machines in men's rooms wherever he traveled.

My personal odyssey is hardly of objective importance to anyone but me and those closest to me. What the writer has agreed to, nevertheless, in accepting this assignment is to set forth a brief statement of where he's at these days in relation to the church. Now, total truth-telling is as impossible as total self-knowledge. And, as if that were not bad enough, many writers discover the urge to role-play irresistible when contributing

JOHN B. MANNION *is president of The Potomac Group, a Washington-based training corporation.*

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to journals of opinion. Superior detachment comes easily; so does penetrating hindsight and intellectual pandering. Cleverness counts more than substance; being avant-garde counts more than anything. Let me eschew such nasty pomps and try my hand at being as straightforward as I can.

There is no completely satisfactory explanation of why I left the church. Fortunately, I really don't feel the need to satisfy anyone on that score. But as I reflect on it at this writing, I can identify four basic notions that assumed reality for me during the middle sixties: the church as anti-person; the problem of evil; religion as myth; the irrelevance of the church to life in the world today. Nothing original here, and that may be the very point, or one of them.

My experience of these notions, however, was not as intellectual arguments from history. Rather I felt them as forces in my own life and in the lives of my contemporaries.

While a true believer I knew as well as anyone else that our church has been accused for centuries of repressing freedom, of denying and demeaning this world in favor of the next, and so on. There were explanations that enabled me to believe that the accusations were true but without impact on the essentials of our tradition. Very comforting to be able to hold both sides of the argument. What began to bother me was the chasm between the carefully articulated theories, rationales and intellectualizing that thrived among the intelligentsia and the Catholicism of the masses. The people have not been trusted even with the whole truth as the church sees it. They have been protected by their betters from the subtleties of theological distinctions and left with simple if brutalizing facts to be accepted by faith.

Thus, the nightly anguish of generations of married couples struggling against nature with the flimsy weapons of Catholic teaching in matters sexual. Thus the daily difficulties of over-extended families—too many children, too few resources—resulting in undernourished lives and much human suffering. That some good comes out of such misery is undeniable; that this good should ever be seen as a justification for the misery which was unnecessary in the first place is outrageous.

The example given is symptomatic of a fundamental attitude toward the individual. Personal freedom and responsibility are respected in all matters that do not conflict with church teaching, preaching and vested interests. When pressed, the "internal forum" is acknowledged, but one is not permitted public action based on it. What tyrant of history would not have loved a regime in which his people could believe anything they wanted to, so long as their public actions and statements conformed to his will?

Believe what you want about women's equality and rights but don't expect one to be bishop. Think what you will of celibacy but you can't live in the rectory if you won't practice it. Study the Bible but if you discover that much of it was taken from earlier pagan sources, don't draw any conclusions without checking with home base. Pursue sacred theology but avoid thinking too deeply about transubstantiation, infallibility, Virgin Birth, etc. Explore anthropology and astronomy, psychology and biology, history and world religions, but of course, if you develop hypotheses that might be—ah—awkward and confusing to the faithful, please be sure to give the proper theological authorities an opportunity to—ah—reconcile the implications of your work with divinely revealed truth.

Somehow, after that, the problem of evil springs easily to mind. Not even in my most pious periods (e.g., when my bedside table was topped by St. Ignatius, Thomas à Kempis, and Frederick Faber, all at the same time) did I ever hear or read a satisfactory answer to the problem posed by the existence of evil, especially cruel and random human suffering, in a world created by a personal, merciful God. When the usual arguments failed, I was exhorted to defer to authority. "If St. Thomas Aquinas and the Little Flower didn't need any more of an answer, who are you to ask for one?" So the issue was filed under T for Troublesome Mysteries and was taken out for occasional airing when I would encounter some of the evil in question: a hopeless mongoloid child; violent death in traffic accidents and fire; slow, painful death by cancer, with young and disturbed children left behind; the Vietnam war; the public mockery and intimidation of a black friend; a son shot in the eye.

Well, as my simplistic conceptualization of the problem changed, it was not accompanied by a lesser sense of injustice and suffering but by a diminishing notion of a personal God. What appalls me is not that the church could not solve this problem but that it thinks it has.

Now to religion as myth. Given the Catholic world of my youth, a small coal-mining town in Pennsylvania, and the rather narrow boundaries of my formal education, I suppose it is typical that I knew almost nothing of other religions and philosophical systems, or of advanced thinking in scientific and humanistic studies. The discovery that Christianity is not unique opened an exciting world to me. The reading and reflection I've done since then led inexorably, for me at least, to the conclusion that religion has indeed been a natural thrust for man, an important exercise in symbolic interpretation of who he is and what life is all about. The supernatural elements became less interesting; the human more compelling because of their universality and continuity.

A Triune God, Spirit within, sacred rocks and waters, God-become-man, man-become-Divine, going to heaven, joining one's ancestors, Second-coming, Reincarnation.

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Pick your revelation and ask what meaning it offers man concerning his life here and now, and what perspective it gives him in relation to his past and future. At root you will likely find concepts of human brotherhood, of harmony and interdependence in nature, of the flow of a unifying life force through time, of justice and love, of hope and goodness in the midst of mystery.

The cultural, theological and ritual expressions of these notions are means of getting at the notions themselves and reaffirming them for ourselves and those around us. The realities exist; it doesn't matter what labels and explanations are put on them by theologians or witch doctors. The demythologized core of religion turns out to be human nature. The God of my youth was created by men.

The more Christian a man is, the more he will engage in the service of society, I used to think. And indeed that is a popular school of thought. And since "the liturgy is the school of Christian formation" (Pius XI, I think,) what better place to start the reformation of the world than in the rites of Catholic worship? That particular school of thought didn't ever achieve what you might construe to be popularity. But I was enrolled for seven or eight years.

My later doubts were born of impatience and frustration. I began to think that maybe the theory is right but it sure as hell is a slow way to deliver aid to the world. Maybe it would be better to work directly on the problems of the day than to go by way of Rome. Of such thoughts are dropouts made.

Cutting through rhetoric, one can say that the church has made a fairly substantial effort towards charity to individuals in need. The tribute is modified by a comparison of dollars spent here as against total budget and other assets. The more serious charge, however, concerns what the church has failed to do in relation to institutions.

As the war in Southeast Asia winds down, the country finally gets a statement from the bishops. One might have hoped, years before, for aid to draft-resisters as well as a ministry to troops; for pressure on banks, businesses and government, using the weight of church funds and investments; for vigorous use of pulpit, press, school systems and organizations, as means to communicate an unequivocating voice of moral leadership; for worldwide efforts to raise the level of indignation and opposition to the tools and techniques ruthlessly employed on those pathetic people and their now-wasted lands. Compared to what might have been done, the church's "official" statements might as well be folded into paper airplanes and floated at passing jets.

In questions of racial justice, black, brown, red, and yellow, the story is the same, just as it is in regard to social reform, poverty and hunger, here and abroad. *Commonweal* readers have seen these issues and others like them pressed in these pages better than I can do. The point is that the church has chosen not to act against the institutions of American society because those institutions are more important to it than the victims of their neglect and oppression. And in this, the church is no different from the generality of the American middle class. What most people hear in church is what they want to hear. *Commonweal* liberals (if that opprobrious old term is still in use) have always been in the minority; they will always be alien in the Catholic community.

This realization was a disappointment as it took shape in me; later it assumed more natural proportions. There is disappointment only for those who expect something else of the church. The desperately poor, the oppressed, the neglected have been wise in their misery; they have not looked to the church for hope or help.

These four notions, all too familiar, are for the believer all too easy to dispute. Studded with generalizations, lacking detailed qualifications, sparse statements are fair game for the apologist. No matter. My purpose is not to convert anyone. Those who may be disturbed (read threatened?) by such indictments being persuasive to another would profit more by examining the data of their own experience than by refuting someone else's.

What matters to me is that what I have testified to here is what is real for me. In this I have confirmed, I discovered, the insight of Emerson: "There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction . . . that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given him to till." I stayed in the church for two years after I abandoned that faith and started work on another—my own. Staying in was a mistake because it was done "for the sake of the church," in order not to disturb family and friends, in order to continue the work of reform, all without regard for what was happening in my own soul. It was stifling.

Now, after almost five years of tilling my own soil, I can say it has been rich with rewards: my family, my work in social action and community development, my friends and interests, my enthusiasm and peace. No longer do I think in terms of "the world," serving and reforming a universal church out there, or other notions that tend to separate one from the reality of his own experience.

What strikes me is how easy it was. Was my belief that shallow? Was the tradition I studied for so many years that superficial? Again, Emerson said better than I can the advice I finally gave myself: "Speak what you think now in hard words; and tomorrow speak what tomorrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said today. . . . Leave your theory, as Joseph his coat in the hand of the harlot, and flee."

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$ & ¢ AND THE UNITED NATIONS

RICHARD C. HOTTELET

The UN is an institution in which every question is political

The United Nations has just escaped another financial crisis. It was averted by one of the few concrete actions of the lackluster 27th General Assembly, an essentially negative decision, sought by the United States and applicable only to it, that no member state shall contribute more than 25 percent of the UN's regular budget.

Since nothing in life is simple and since the UN reflects reality, this statement must be qualified. What the Assembly's resolution averted was a political crisis. The financial condition of the organization remains lamentable and totally unaffected by the vote of December 13. Further, the resolution was negative in the sense that it was limiting. However, its effect may be positive, in correcting an imbalance that distorted reality. An earthquake is not pleasant but it is natural and if it leaves a more stable substructure it may even have served a good purpose.

This was not the first political battle to be fought in financial terms. The confrontation of 1964, involving Article 19 of the UN Charter, was much more dramatic and far-reaching. The United States tried then to compel the Soviet Union to pay its share of the peacekeeping operations: ONUC in the Congo and UNEF in the Middle East. Washington invoked the charter provision that any member in arrears by the equivalent of two years' assessments shall lose its vote in the General Assembly. The Soviet Union, engaged since Khrushchev's shoe-pounding appearance of 1960 in restricting the UN's and the Secretary General's capacity to act, denounced those operations as illegal. It refused to pay for any part of them and warned that moves to force collection would destroy the organization. Elaborate lobbying persuaded the members that Moscow meant what it said and the United States backed down. With that the peacekeeping arrears, including $77 million for the USSR alone, were set aside with the explicit agreement that there was no legal obligation to pay. Paving the way for the compromise was a tacit understanding that the Soviet Union would make a voluntary contribution to resolve the UN's deepening financial difficulties.

Since then, 23 governments have made voluntary contributions of $21.7 million to bail the UN out. Even France, which took a stand similar to the Russian, paid a token lump sum and has started regular payments for the amortization of the bond issue that largely financed the Congo operation. The Soviet Union, however, has to this day ignored the understanding. Moscow has made the political and constitutional point that it will not be forced to pay for past operations it does not like. (These include, more symbolically, the UN Commission for Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea and the UN Memorial Cemetery in Korea.) As to future peacekeeping enterprises, the Soviet Union is determined to ensure that none will be initiated without its consent or prolonged beyond its desire. It insists that any such action be authorized and then kept under review by the Security Council alone, where it exercises the veto.

The financial crisis of 1964 was, therefore, also a political showdown over peacekeeping and has had this double effect—financial and political—on the present.

Financially, the UN remains on the edge of insolvency. It owes $86.4 million dollars for goods and services rendered. In addition to this short-term debt, it must pay the remaining principal of $113 million on the Congo Bonds and about $30 million on the cost of the UN Headquarters building. No problem at all if the UN could collect unpaid assessments on its regular budget amounting to $68.1 million dollars, $49.5 outstanding for UNEF and $82.1 for ONUC, a total of $199.7 accounts receivable as of 30 November 1972. Alas, of this, the UN expects to collect only some $14 million.

The holdouts include not only the Soviet Union, but also the other members of the Soviet bloc who raise the same objections. France, Portugal, India, Albania and South Africa, too, have refused payment for one thing or another. The Peoples Republic of China has repudiated any responsibility for $16.6 million in regular dues owed by the Republic of China when it left the UN in October 1971, plus further millions for ONUC, UNEF, the Korean items and new ones which displease Peking —such as help for Tibetan refugees.

By imposing rigorous economy and by persuading member states to pay their annual assessments early, Secretary General Kurt Waldheim skated over the thinnest of ice in 1972. Even so, on six occasions he had to borrow from certain internal accounts to meet

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the Secretariat payroll. The next few months are likely to be even more precarious.

The absurdities, hypocrisies and shortcomings that have marked the work of the United Nations to an unfortunate degree—and which helped to set the stage for the U.S. 25-percent proposal—were recapitulated in this fall's discussion. The Soviet Union led the opposition. Soviet spokesmen argued furiously that the United States was destroying the principle of calculating assessment according to capacity to pay. They contended that, far from setting a ceiling of 25 percent, the United States should pay more. Yakov Malik suggested 38.4 percent adding that the U.S. had caused the UN's deficit in the first place, through illegal maneuvers, and should make a voluntary contribution of $50 million to meet it. The U.S., he declared, actually earned money by having the UN in New York; its "monopolies" were draining billions of dollars in profits from the developing countries; it was spending more than $75 billion a year

on armaments and as much as $30 billion in Vietnam, yet wants to take $13 million from "this impecunious organization." The United States, cried Malik, was like a rich man taking the last shirt of a pauper. He denounced the extensive and determined American effort to marshal the required votes as blackmail and international armtwisting, adding that if the U.S. resolution were adopted "the Soviet Union reserved the right to take corresponding measures."

Perhaps the most bizarre episode of this little drama was over a side issue. The refusal on the part of the Soviet Union and others to pay for various UN programs covered by the regular budget leads to an annual shortfall of some $4 million. In past years the money was spent nevertheless, and the UN's debt simply rose by that amount. In 1972, however, Secretary General Waldheim ordered restrictions on new appointments and other savings which offset the shortfall and brought the budget at least into balance for the year. His action was welcomed by all members as a step toward fiscal soundness. Then the Soviet Union rose in the Assembly's administrative and budget committee to declare that under UN financial regulations, money not expended should be credited to future contributions by member states. As the members listened in popeyed disbelief, the soviet delegate explained that the money could not be detained by the UN, since that would mean forcing states to pay for items to which they objected, including expenditures contrary to the UN Charter. Waldheim had to point out that the money had not been expended because it did not exist. It had never been paid in. He went on, with tears in his voice, to describe the consequences if his objections were overridden, the financial regulations applied in this case and the credit pro-rated. The Soviet Union, whose nonpayment had helped create the problem, would be given a credit of $600,000 on the 1973 budget, which could then be expected to fall short by something like eight or ten million dollars. The committee saw Waldheim's point but it solved that problem for 1972 only. Balancing the 1973 budget will be another highwire act without a safety net.

There can be little doubt that the continued financial malaise, stemming from and coupled with a political determination to restrict the UN's capacity to act against the will and the interest of sovereign members, had considerable effect on American public opinion. Especially since its prime movers were highly selective in serving their own interests. The Soviet Union, for instance, opposed ONUC and UNEF, blocked every effort to engage the UN in the Vietnam war and refused to pay for the UN force now keeping the peace in Cyprus. It vetoed calls for cease fire when Sukarno declared war on Malaysia and when the tragedy of Bangladesh became an international conflict. The Soviet veto kept the UN out of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. But the Soviet Union joins the chorus when the cry is raised for economic, political and military sanctions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter against South Africa, Portugal, Rhodesia and Israel. Most recently, when the Secretary General brought the problem of international terrorism to the 27th General Assembly, the Western nations urged legal measures to prevent and punish aerial hijacking, indiscriminate bombing and political murder. But African and Arab states, contending that legal instruments might be used against their various "national liberation movements," obtained Communist support in shunting the project to a committee.

The fact is that the UN is an institution in which every question—of finance, human rights, the human environment and all the rest— is political. One government's terrorist is another's freedom fighter, and one condemns as intervention what another applauds as liberation.

Americans who note this with indignation do not understand the United Nations. They may also not know, or have forgotten, that the United States has played the same game—bypassing the UN in its own highly dubious military intervention in Lebanon in 1958 and in the more massive armed intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965. There is no question,

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though, that U.S. policy and the American public's view of the UN from the very beginning has favored an active organization. Harry S. Truman advocated that it be more than the sum of its parts and he, like most Americans, saw the UN building a new and better structure of international law from case to case—as the United States of America have done through their own adaptable Constitution. But the Connally Amendment, which leaves Washington free to deny the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, and U.S. adherence to the veto power reflect another equally valid aspect of this relationship, namely: a reluctance to transfer sovereign power to the United Nations, notwithstanding the fact that the principles of the U.S. Constitution and the UN Charter are fully in harmony.

For many years, there was no problem. American satisfaction with the UN and "belief" in it ran high. Those were the years in which the UN was almost a Western club and U.S. interests were protected by a safe majority. This changed after 1960 when an enormous influx of new African and Asian nations altered its composition and the Soviet Union pressed its frontal assault on the UN's capacity to act. Today, American public opinion is disillusioned with the United Nations and the American decision to lower the ceiling of budget contributions reflects this mood.

The reduction will save the United States some 14 or 15 million dollars a year on the UN regular budget plus several million more on the budgets of the UN's specialized agencies; a piddling sum barely worth the trouble. It is also financially irrelevant. The Nixon Administration has declared its intention to maintain or increase its contributions to the UN's Voluntary Programs. In 1971 these payments totalled $312 million, equal to some two and a half times the regular budget assessments and making up a significantly higher proportion, 45 percent, of the cost of such undertakings as UNICEF—the UN Children's Fund, UNDP—the Development Program, the High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Food Program and others. The U.S. has recently promised to contribute $40 million to the new $100 million Environment Fund. The act of reduction is, therefore, aimed at budgets where assessments are set by majority vote and not at voluntary activities which are, by definition, congenial to U.S. interests. It is, plainly, a political act.

The United States pointed out that as far back as 1946 it had proposed a ceiling of 25 percent and that in 1957, the Assembly had asserted the principle that no state should pay more than 30 percent. Yet, Washington had gone on paying more and could certainly afford to continue doing so. If it now dug in its heels and mounted the largest diplomatic effort at persuasion since the China vote of 1971; and if, more importantly, it won over the British and many other members, the rationale was political. The cumulative disillusionment of American public opinion could not be ignored, leaving aside the fanatics and their cry to get the U.S. out of the UN and vice versa. One interesting and important manifestation was the change of outlook in the Jewish community. By tradition and historical experience internationally minded American Jews had been among the most articulate and enthusiastic opinion leaders on behalf of the UN. They felt sorely disappointed in the role the UN played in the June war and in its subsequent inability to promote a peace settlement. But the feeling was widely shared and increasingly reflected in Congress. In 1971, the House of Representatives balked for the first time at approving money for UNDP. For the second successive year Congress refused altogether to pay the annual assessment to the International Labor Organization. It also failed to provide the U.S. contribution to the expansion of UN Headquarters in New York. And, in a step of doubtful legality, Congress overrode mandatory Security Council sanctions to permit the importation of chrome and nickel from Rhodesia. In 1972, to cap it all, Congress voted unilaterally to cut the U.S. payment to the regular UN budget to 25 percent, as of January 1974.

These signals from a Democratic Congress, a Republican Administration and a bipartisan public opinion registered strongly with the Western countries and with others. They got the message that the reduction was inevitable and that if it were blocked, Washington and the American public might well respond with more drastic measures such as cutting development and other voluntary funds. In other words, the United States threatened a crisis if it were thwarted, and the Assembly, voting three to one for the lower ceiling, was voting consciously to avert that crisis.

Feelings were bruised, to be sure, and suffered further abrasion from the nomination of John Scali to succeed George Bush. The appointment was taken widely as additional evidence that the United States was downgrading the UN. Some observers, however, took it all less tragically. The cut in the U.S. share of the regular budget will easily be balanced by the admission of the two German states to the UN in 1973. Many members found it logical that the United States, lowering its profile in world affairs, should want to appear less exposed in the UN. Nothing of substance is changed. The U.S. remains the world's most powerful state and the chief support of the UN system. Its influence is not and never was measured by the size of its assessment. Eighty-six member states, two-thirds of the total and enough to pass any resolution in the Assembly, pay less than 4 percent of the UN budget. If paying less makes Americans less sensitive to their long-established inability to run things their way, if it makes them more relaxed and realistic about the uses of diplomacy to which the UN can be put, this latest drama may even have been for the best.

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BOOKING THE MOVIES

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

THE ONLY profession lower than reviewing movies is reviewing movie books. Since the books don't cost as much as the movies to make, they are produced with even less consideration for their worth and in even greater numbers than the movies themselves are. Yet while there always seems to be room on the publishers' trade lists for one more title analyzing the "transcendental style" of some director or other, many of the handful of worthwhile books written over the years are now out of print. For instance, none of the excellent social studies done of Hollywood two or three decades ago —Margaret Thorp's *America at the Movies*, Leo Rosten's *Hollywood*, Hortense Powdermaker's *Hollywood the Dream Factory*—is still available.

But I'm supposed to be praising the living, not mounting the dead. Let it suffice to say that among the publishing industry's other inverted priorities is a Darwinism favoring survival of the weakest. As a result the most plentiful criticism, and the worst by far, is the sort that discusses John Ford as if the critic were writing a hip talk appreciation of Michelangelo. Most of this anagogical criticism seems to take for its model writers like itinerant film journalist Manny Farber. In a recent collection of his essays entitled *Negative Space*, Farber informed us, in a sentence perfectly characteristic of that whole critical school for which he is a patron saint, "A movie filled with negative space is always a textural work throbbing with acuity." Clearly there is a negative space between Mr. Farber's ears.

My low regard for the annual yield of film books is not idle, for during the past year *Commonweal* sent me copies of about 25 film books that were received for review. In a field as overgrown with nonsense as this one, the standards of literacy, argumentation and coherence cannot usually be applied. The most that can be asked from the great majority of film books is mere usefulness—to provide some information not obtainable elsewhere, to straighten out the record of some controversial productions, to delineate obscure lines of influence or development, to provide complete credits or a filmography, etc. Even by these dim lights, 80 percent of the books *Commonweal* received were unmentionable (so I won't), but the other 20 percent, surprisingly, were made up of books not only useful but readable.

Gerald Mast's *A Short History of the Movies* (Pegasus, $4.95) is certainly useful, if only because there are almost no books that do well what Mast's title advertises. Unlike predecessors that have tended to be a mind-boggling onslaught of titles and dates, Mast's book is eclectic, which gives him room to dwell on important directors while omitting minor ones. This would have obliterated the sense of a history from a lesser book, since history seldom moves straight from one major figure to another. But Mast has compensated for this by making the transitions from one figure to another into neat, apt critical comparisons. These transitions are written from an historical perspective far more helpful than the historical detail that clutters most past surveys.

Certainly no one has done more to give film criticism a good literary name than André Bazin. Bazin was a founder of *Cahiers du Cinéma*, and after his death in 1958 his essays were collected into four volumes under the title *What Is Cinema?*. The first volume was translated into English in 1967 by Hugh Gray. Now Gray has published Volume II (University of California Press, $6.95). If this collection is not quite as stunning as the first one, it is only because more of these essays deal with individual directors or films. French criticism tends to be at its most lucid when the critic is generalizing or theorizing, as Bazin was in most of Volume I.

But like all great critics. Bazin was always thinking through a single set of related ideas, no matter how slight the occasion for the essay he was working on at the moment. The theme of his essays is that the supreme aesthetic of cinema is realism, and that the cinema of deep focus (von Stroheim, Murnau, Welles, Wyler, Flaherty, etc.) is more realistic, in the aesthetic sense, than that of montage (Griffiths, Eisenstein, Gance, Ford). The newly translated essays demonstrate how substantial these ideas, first introduced in Volume I, can be as a basis for criticism. Whatever the cinema may lack in itself to become an art is almost supplied, at times, by the eloquence of Bazin's prose.

If Bazin's essays are worth reading, then so must Jean-Luc Godard's be. Not only was Godard a protégé of Bazin's at *Cahiers du Cinéma*, but, more important, he is perhaps the greatest filmmaker working today. Yet while Godard's essays may be more polemical and hasty than Bazin's, they are not just an annotation for his films. *Godard on Godard* (Viking, $3.95) is worth reading in its own right and represents a major document in the history of film criticism as well as filmmaking. This collection of Godard's writings from 1950-1967 is further enhanced by a set of scholarly content footnotes that translator Tom Milne has done.

To finish on a lighter note, for those of you wondering what to get as a gift for that pimply nephew with the concave chest whose only personality trait is a passion for old

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movies, there are a couple of well-turned-out, expensive books with lots of stills. Ted Sennett's *Warner Brothers Presents* (Arlington House, $11.95) has been done in impeccable taste. I say this because Sennett has picked just the studio and just the period—*The Jazz Singer* (1929) to *White Heat* (1949)—that I would have picked. In fact, if I had had enough spare time, and couldn't think of anything else to think about, I would love to have written this book.

Or would I? Underneath it all Sennett seems to have developed a certain impatience with these films. Maybe all these old Bette Davis and George Brent features don't bear too much looking into, as Conrad's Winnie Vreer would say. Perhaps what soured Sennett on some of these films was having to think about them in order to write a book. This is understandable, though, and not really very noticeable. You have been tipped off to this book's whole appeal (and limitation) when you notice on the dust jacket that it's a selection of the Nostalgia Book Club.

The last book—which shall be first, at least in price—is *The International Encyclopedia of Film* (Crown, $17.95). No reference books as good as the Oxford Companions to Literature have been done for film; but when they are, the British will probably do them too. The best book until this encyclopedia came along was *The Filmgoer's Companion*, done by Leslie Halliwell, an Englishman, in 1965. Now that book is superseded by this one, which was compiled under the general editorship of another Englishman, Dr. Roger Manvell. In addition to over 500 folio-size pages of articles written by 15 contributors, the encyclopedia contains extensive bibliographies and indices. Perhaps its outstanding feature, however, is its lengthy articles on "Cinematography," "Journalism in Film" and 10 other general topics, as well as its articles on the national cinema of 30 different countries. For anyone interested enough in film to need a reference book, this encyclopedia is one of the few comprehensive enough to be worth the price.

What Kind of God? A Question of Faith

HEINZ ZAHRNT

Augsburg, $5.95

God the Problem

GEORGE D. KAUFMAN

Harvard U. Press, $10

LOUIS DUPRE

Men who hold a finger on the pulse of their time usually stand too close for critical detachment. Heinz Zahrnt, editor of the Lutheran *Sonntagsblatt* presents a refreshing exception. *What Kind of God?* (the all too free translation of *Gott kann nicht sterben*) abounds as much with common sense and pointed criticism as with perceptive insights. It is somewhat difficult to tell what this book is all about and I am not sure that the author had an entirely clear idea of it himself. At my own risk I would describe it as a meditation on what ought to be done and what ought to be avoided in theology after the present communal crisis of faith. Zahrnt judiciously traces this crisis back not to such vague entities as Western man or the Christian worldview, but to that momentous and elusive cultural phenomenon, the Enlightenment, which overnight converted a considerable portion of the Christian intellectual world back to paganism. The trend has never been reversed and has now reached the main body of believers. Thus to modern man the world has become altogether worldly. Natural disasters or mass accidents raise no more theological questions than a flight to the moon. Theologians no longer ponder why some died and some were saved when the bridge of San Luis Rey collapsed. Yet theologian Zahrnt defends the Enlightenment and would welcome to see more of it today. It made man aware of the autonomy of reason, but also of the limitations of what it took a whole history to develop. This sense of proportion has been lost. Also, the Enlightenment abolished the dualism of nature and the supernatural: today this is being interpreted as if transcendence itself had been suppressed from human existence.

Yet Zahrnt is far from attributing the radical questions of modern man to cultural oversimplifications. To him those questions are urgent and mark if not the death of God, at least the death of a prevalent conception of God. But a change in man's experience of God affects God himself, for God is to be found in the subjectivity of man. He never becomes an independent, objective entity. Here Zahrnt's thought takes a radical turn. "It is in the experience of God that man 'has' God, and in no other way, and therefore the expression 'transformations of God' refers in the end to God himself." Unfortunately this intriguing idea is not given the logical clarification which it so badly needs. As many of Zahrnt's important thoughts, it remains a loose insight left to the reader's private resources of integration.

At any rate, our contemporaries no longer experience the transcendent as *above* the world but as *within* it. Zahrnt fully recognizes this fact, yet he refuses to redefine God, with the theologians of hope, as the future of man. "To look for God in the future is just as much a human conception as the old idea of supernaturalism. The coming of God has to be experienced in the present time, or else it is not experienced at all." Nor does "immanent transcendence" imply that the God of modern man is his fellow man. What would be the specific contribution of a Christianity which is reduced to "humanizing the world" and whose aims are mainly political? Or, for that matter, what is Christian about revolutionary action inspired by Che Guevara or Mao Tse-Tung, with barely a pat on the back from Jesus? The Gospel must be adapted—Zahrnt even claims that each epoch writes its Fifth Gospel—but it must not be misread. Jesus was never mainly "the man for others." To leave out his relation to God is to take the heart out of his life. An a-theistic Christ is not worth saving.

Still Zahrnt has no desire of return-

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ing to a Scripture positivism of Karl Barth's take-it-or-leave-it type, even though he frequently uses the old Lutheran password *"trotzdem"* (in spite of it.) He consistently rejects a God who is *added* to human experience, or, worse, who *replaces* it. The question is how God may be found *within* experience. Zahrnt's answer to this question is considerably vaguer than his critique of false alternatives. The essential difference, he points out, does not consist in accepting or rejecting the idea of God, but in asking or refusing questions of ultimate meaning, in attempting to unify existence or settling for a succession of fragmented experiences. The religious attitude primarily consists in "a reaching beyond ourselves to be more than we are, of being drawn forward, of going beyond the present stage of openness toward something new." Those characteristics may be essential, but I doubt whether they are sufficient to constitute what Zahrnt himself defines as transcendence, namely that God is not identical with this world. Again my reservations are due to a dissatisfaction with the author's theoretical development, not to a disagreement with his position. From the polemical part it clearly appears how much this position differs from that of the present-day worldly theologians.

The attitude of "transparence" which encounters God in the reality of the world is imposed by radically new cultural conditions. As such it calls for a new way of doing theology. Zahrnt advocates an "empirical" theology which can be verified in actual experience. Theology in the past started from the text and largely neglected the context of experience. According to Zahrnt our contemporaries need "a theology in concrete terms, related to particular situations, and with a pragmatic impulse." Such a theology would assist the church in asking the right questions instead of providing answers to questions which are no longer being asked.

This book is a call to action, not an initiation of it. Yet the passages in which the author took the trouble to develop his ideas more fully (particularly the one on the personality of God) convince us that he could be a contributor to the renewal which he promotes. Above all he excels in those qualities which will be more needed than all others: judgment, critical sense and perceptiveness.

Gordon Kaufman's *God the Problem* actually initiates a theology of experience, although his concept of experience may not be what Zahrnt had in mind. The categories of a religious tradition become meaningless when no more specific experience corresponds to them. Now it is obvious enough that many experiences which formerly justified the Christian concepts have disappeared. Can anything in our contemporary experience replace them and is it strong enough to support the old categories? Those are the pertinent questions which Mr. Kaufman raises in his book. He restricts his investigation to the idea of God, the ultimate category of Christian theology. It is also the one that poses the most problems, since it appears to be connected with a dualistic worldview which appears largely "mythological" to modern man.

Yet, Kaufman argues, the term 'God' can be justified entirely by "this-worldly ('secular') experiences and conceptions." Indeed those were the primary experiences that gave rise to the idea of God in the first place. Modern man is well acquainted with the awareness of the *limits*, and, like his primitive ancestor from the variety of limit-experiences he abstracts certain characteristics which he builds into a notion of ultimate limit. "The ultimate experiential ground for such speech [about God] should now be evident. Talk about God appears when the ultimate Limit is understood on analogy with the experience of *personal limiting* or known in the interaction of personal wills." Some clarification is obviously needed. Is the analogy of a "personal limiter" the basic experience and the idea of an "ultimate personal limiter" a mere deduction, or does a separate *experience* justify the momentous transition to an ultimate, personal Limiter?

Kaufman appears to opt for the second alternative: certain experiences within the world bring us up against the limit of the world itself. But this only raises the further questions: Is this experience still of the same, "secular" nature as the ones with which it is analogical? And, more basically, is the experience of finitude as such a sufficient basis for the idea of God? Kaufman himself admits that the transition from the experience of finitude to "speculation" on the nature of what limits me is by no means a necessary one. Indeed, it is not and respectable philosophers (e.g., Maurice Merleau-Ponty) have drawn the exact opposite conclusion: to them the total contingency of our world indicates the non-existence of God.

Kaufman rejects such positive *religious* experiences as Otto's feeling of the "numinous" or Tillich's awareness of the "unconditioned" or "ground," and is determined to ground the whole idea of God on the experience of "a more secular or this-worldly temperament." But how could the secular provide the justifying experience for the most fundamental religious idea? How could a secular experience ever warrant the usage of the term God except by virtue of the sort of "metaphysical" or "mythological" (the two terms often appear to be equivalent) transition which this book set out to eliminate? The fact that an entirely negative experience *can* be interpreted in the glowingly positive phrases of religious parlance, is certainly no justification for doing so to one who accepts no concepts that are not fully grounded in an *experiential* basis of the same kind. I do not see how anyone who accepts Mr. Kaufman's argument could answer his question whether there is any reason for being more than an agnostic, affirmatively without referring to "mythological" reasons. If every positive religious experience (i.e., one that gives a positive content to world limit) is necessarily "otherworldly" and "mythological," then the language which finds it own possible justifica-

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tion in such an experience, will inevitably be of the same caliber.

But perhaps the author has merely "denied knowledge of God in order to make room for faith"? Indeed, he has, but in a sense which reminds us more of Barth than of Kant. For the faith which is justified neither by a positive religious experience nor by the slightest basis in reason, provides many people with "the anchor symbol for a whole way of life." Theories of God may be just "mythological and metaphysical ways and models with which man has pictured the world and himself" but man must act in an orderly fashion and to many the symbol of God may serve as an ordering principle.

Granting that this may be, would it still be the case for the true hero of this book, the man who has liberated himself of "mythological" prejudices? For the initial question was what we could still justify by *experience* without invoking mythological ghosts? Is the invocation of God as an "ordering" principle anything more than "mythological", since it is neither required nor justified by experience? Kaufman solves the problem in a pragmatist way. Fact is that belief in God helps some people to be moral. "The primary question is not what is true, but what is right."

But is what is true the next question, or no question at all? The author hedges. The idea they have thus found, he admits, may not be "the final and lasting metaphysical Truth." But is there any guarantee that it is a truth at all, that even the term truth is appropriate?

To claim that faith in God means "practically to order all of life and experience in personalistic, purposive, moral terms and to construe the world and man accordingly" is to define the religious attitude in terms which no religious man known to me would ever have accepted as adequate. It flies in the face of factual evidence as well and Mr. Kaufman himself admits that "not every conception of God is morally supportive and productive." But if neither saint nor sinner conforms to the definition (Calvin and Augustine as little as the Catholic mafioso), then what is its function? Indeed, the author's own description differs from his principle, for to say that faith "involves committing one's whole self to a definite style of life and particular way of construing the world" is very different from equating faith with morality.

Upon closing this book few readers will feel that the theological idea of God has been given a reliable basis in experience. This feeling is due mainly to the positivist restrictions imposed upon the concept of experience by the sources from which Professor Kaufman draws most of his philosophical information. One can only wish the author had followed the more comprehensive, American trend of "radical empiricism," all the more so since he himself is disposed to widen the concept to experiences which are not primarily world-directed. In a memorable passage the symbol of God is described as so bound up with every dimension of experience that it affects and forms the very apprehension and understanding of the world. This is the sort of experience of which we would have liked to hear more. Similarly this study contains an insightful chapter on the meaning of the "act of God," which presupposes a different kind of experience than our ordinary awareness of the world.

Kaufman is onto something exciting and we shall follow his further attempts with great interest. His acquaintance with linguistic philosophy as well as his methodic mind predisposes him in a unique way to succeed in a badly needed project; the justification of God-language through experience. In the present volume he has explored the terrain and closed off some dead ends. We now wait for the rest.

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REVIEWERS

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Inequality

CHRISTOPHER JENCKS, et al.

Basic Books, $12.50

MAURICE R. BERUBE

Inequality promises to generate widespread controversy. The pre-publication publicity of the study has already shaken the world of education. What Christopher Jencks and his colleagues at the Center for Educational Policy Research of Harvard have concluded is that the schoolhouse is a peripheral institution in our society.

The study, (with its long subtitle: *A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America*), is the product of three years of work and a half million dollar grant from the Carnegie Foundation. Much of that labor involved the reworking of some of the data of James Coleman's landmark work published in 1966. Indeed, Jencks attributed his interest in investigating the limits of schooling to the Coleman Report.

Jencks' two major theses are provocative. First, Jencks argues that schooling has no effect on students. Second, intelligence (what Jencks calls cognitive skill) has no bearing on social mobility. And finally, education is not the golden door out of poverty. Indeed, Jencks and his colleagues maintain the real causes for worldly success have little to do with schooling and more to do with chance and one's personality. In short, Jencks has revived the Horatio Alger myth.

The development of intelligence, Jencks states, is primarily dependent on the characteristics of the child entering school. It is not important what is taught at that school so much as one's social and economic background. "Everything else—the school budget, its policies, the characteristics of the teacher," Jencks offers, "is either secondary

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or completely irrelevant." He assigns 45% of intelligence to be due to heredity, 35% to environment and 20% to a combination of the two.

Jencks, however, would not eliminate schools. Instead, schools should be made comfortable and joyful—no more. ". . . Giving children better schools is not going to eliminate poverty and economic inequality among adults," Jencks reasons. If the schools are impotent in eliminating poverty, what can be done? Jencks answers that the only means of reducing inequality lie beyond the schoolhouse door. What should be done, Jencks says, is to forget the schools and concentrate on a political program calling for a sweeping redistribution of income. That prospect, however, barely seems plausible in this country at this time.

"As long as egalitarians assume that public policy cannot contribute to economic equality directly but must proceed by the ingenious manipulations of marginal institutions like the schools, progress will remain glacial," *Inequality* states. "If we want to move beyond this tradition we will have to establish political control over the economic institutions that shape our society. This is what other countries usually call socialism. Anything less will end in the same disappointment as the reforms of the 1960's."

Is *Inequality* the last word? Certainly not. Jencks has cut against the grain of a number of important studies. Consider his proposition that schools are educationally impotent. That contradicts the Andrew Greeley-Peter Rossi study of Catholic education. Greeley-Rossi found that Catholic schools helped to reinforce religious belief.

Furthermore, Jencks disregards the substantial increase of IQ's in certain programs. Headstart registered notable gains. The Israeli Kibbutz dramatically increased IQ's by as much as 30-40 points—no small feat.

Jencks' second proposition—that schooling does not affect economic mobility—is equally faulty. Few believe that one's job is wholly attributable to one's intelligence. Only in a fictional meritocracy would intelligence have a final and decisive role. Although there is a bit of Horatio Alger in developing one's economic prospects, Jencks' analysis proves constricting.

In his haste to deflate an overblown educational balloon, Jencks pays little attention to the impact of the credentials society. Intelligence may not correspond with success, but it is certain that one's prospects are much brighter with the credential of a degree. The diploma provides entrée to better-paying jobs. What one does after passing the credential barrier is dependent on a number of factors including intelligence as well as luck and personality. Recent statistics reveal a far from casual relation between education and income. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the lifetime earnings of a person with less than 8 years schooling is estimated to be $214,000; compared to a college graduate's earnings of $584,000—more than twice as much.

Moreover, Jencks' assumptions concerning reform are also misguided. The simple but unhappy fact is that "the reforms of the sixties" were never adopted. Our schools have yet to be integrated and school decentralization has not yet transferred power to local boards.

Jencks' starting point, however, is commendable. Many in the educational establishment did promote education as the one and only true way out of poverty. Jencks has vigorously attacked this rhetoric which was a regular feature in the Office of Economic Opportunity during the war on poverty. But not all school reformers made such exaggerated claims as to how much schooling can do.

Jencks has overreached. His arguments often flout the common-sensical. In attempting to correct the rhetoric of schoolmen Jencks has thrown the baby out with the bathwater. No sensible reformer takes the naive and extreme view of what the schools can accomplish. And any position that emphasizes only one rigid solution cannot explain the complexities of reform. Both the schools and the society at large must be reformed. In beating his straw men Jencks finds himself at the other extreme calling only for some measure of socialism. In his career Jencks has run the gamut. He slowly evolved from an integrationist to a promoter of parental involvement, and then to be the prime mover of the voucher system.

In the end, Jencks joins a solemn band of academics who are mounting, in Frank Riessman's excellent phrase, a new assault on equality. Along with such academics as Edward Banfield, Daniel Moynihan and Arthur Jensen, Jencks has provided a fresh cornerstone for the house of benign neglect. The sixties had opened with optimism; psychologist Jerome Bruner declared that any child at a given stage of development could be taught. The seventies have taken a 180-degree turn; now we are being told by Arthur Jensen that blacks are genetically inferior in intelligence and by Christopher Jencks that schools are no longer important. This is the social science that provides the conservative Nixon government with a rationale for inaction.

World Without Borders

LESTER R. BROWN

Random House, $8.95

PETER J. HENRIOT

One of the most significant books of the decade—in terms of debate stirred and policy affected—was published last spring. *The Limits to Growth*, by Donella H. Meadows *et al.* This "Club of Rome" study raised profound questions of technical, political and ethical nature about the future of our globe. Given the inescapable fact that we live in a finite world, how do we adjust to an equilibrium society which is also an equitable society?

Unfortunately the implications of the "Club of Rome" study were not readily available to a large general audience because the book tended to be long on complex equations and short on concrete examples. For this reason, *World Without Borders* will be especially welcome. Lester Brown, a Senior Fellow at the Overseas De-

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velopment Council in Washington, fills his study with one example after another of the unified global society in which we live today. Brown's framework is similar to that put forth in *The Limits to Growth*: either we recognize our interdependence and accommodate ourselves to a finite earth, or we perish.

With lucid style Brown sketches an overview of the late 20th century—marked by per capita increase in income, per capita decrease in natural amenities, and the increase of indirect effects (mostly negative) of economic growth. At every point he emphasizes the inter-relationship of problems. This is especially true in his discussion of the environmental crisis and its integral link to the widening rich-poor gap in the world: ". . . global cooperation on the scale needed to preserve the eco-system on which the quality of life in the rich countries depends must await a much more serious effort by the rich to reduce the widening rich-poor economic gap."

The U.S. citizen might tend to see life in a "world without borders" as influenced most strongly in the years ahead by population growth. At the present world growth rate of two per cent, there will be twice as many people on earth at the start of the 21st century as there are now. Serious—in terms not just of quantity of people but of quality of life—as this growth rate is, it is not seen as the *most* serious problem by the nations of the Third World. Rather, these nations feel most keenly their economic dependence on the rich countries, a dependence maintained and fostered by the structures of a global economy which clearly favors the haves over the have-nots.

The author presents a startling picture of the impact of U.S. business throughout the world when he compares the gross national products of nation-states with the gross annual sales of multinational corporations. General Motors is eighteenth on a list of 100, beating out East Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Argentina, and Czechoslovakia in the top twenty-five. Standard Oil of New Jersey, Ford, General Electric, Chrysler and IBM are all in the top fifty. Terms of trade, industrial development plans, employment policies, and other key economic decisions—these are made in board rooms in the U.S. and have a powerful influence around the world, especially in the poor countries. If we look honestly at the business scene, it is clearly unrealistic to think of the U.S. in any "isolationist" sense.

One key issue which does emerge dramatically in Brown's study is the issue of distribution of wealth. The challenges of the remainder of this century—environmental deterioration, population growth, the increasing rich/poor gap, rising unemployment, widespread hunger, intense urbanization—are all challenges which are not going to be met without a reordering of priorities that will of necessity mean a more sparing lifestyle for the rich nations. This basic issue of social justice will be a special challenge for Americans. Six percent of the world's population, we Americans have no right—nor do we have promise of continued tolerance—to consume forty percent of the world's resources.

One element in Brown's study I would like to have seen more fully developed is the political emphasis. In his discussion of "a new social ethic" for a global society, he does say that a political person is required, a woman or man who takes political steps to see that the public interest is assured in the pursuit of quality of life. But Brown's political analysis is limited and his practical suggestions sparse. We are all talking these days about "changing structures," but not enough of us are putting that goal into concrete action-terms, especially at a global level.

It would be difficult to recommend this book too highly. It is precisely the right book at the right time. When we Americans are currently feeling some inclination to turn in on ourselves and our domestic woes, we need this kind of shock-treatment to oblige us to realize our need for a global vision. We are not going to solve the problems in the U.S. by looking at them solely in U.S. terms. In a "world without borders," interdependence is a keen fact of life—or death.

In Hiding: The Life of Manuel Cortes

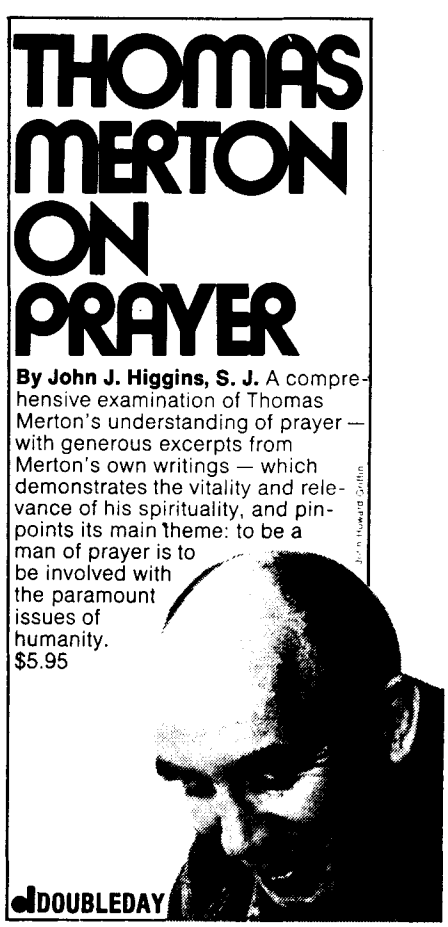
RONALD FRASER

Pantheon, $6.95

JEFFREY MEYERS

Twenty miles west of Malaga, in the hills overlooking the Mediterranean, lies the lovely village of Mijas, whose white cubist houses, narrow cobblestoned lanes and smart shops attract thousands of tourists every week. But none of them realizes that the sculptured saints and angels sold in the antique shops were looted from churches burned during the Civil War, for as Ronald Fraser writes, "Behind its tourist facade, Mijas today hides its past."

In Hiding is a fascinating revelation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of this past by Manuel Cortes, an extraordinary man whose "memories are more real than his present life." A deeply committed Socialist, Manuel was mayor of Mijas during the last year of Republican government in Andalusia, and just before the occupation of Franco's Nationalists he rushed up the coast toward Almeria with thousands of other refugees—"They only lived who fled." Manuel's wife Juliana, who shares his narrative (recorded and edited by Fraser) whose bitter pragmatism contrasts with his kindly idealism, describes their separation: "I'll never forget that moment, not if a hundred years pass over me. Never. I can feel the pain now as I felt it then. To be there, at this farm with only my mother and small daughter and having to say to him, 'Go.' Not knowing if I would ever see him again, and the people saying, 'They're coming, they're killing as they come.' "

When Manuel secretly returned to his village at the end of the war, his frightened family convinced him that he would be shot if he surrendered, for a *denuncia*, signed by three witnesses and easy to obtain in those times of incredible hatred, was sufficient for an execution. Most of the conspicuous survivors had either gone into exile or become bandits in the Sierras (they lasted until the early 1950s), but Manuel hid to await a new regime or an amnesty that would make it safe to reappear—and he waited for thirty years, until 1969. His profoundly moving story is a unique combination of personal and historical narrative in which the dynamics of his secret family life merge with his vivid recollections of the most momentous years of modern Spain—from the fall of the monarchy to the end of the Civil War—as it was lived by the rural working class. This book is a vital complement to the personal accounts of foreigners in the war: the experiences of a soldier in Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, of a journalist in Koestler's *The Spanish Testament*, and of a civilian in Mitchell's *My House in Malaga*.

At first Manuel hid in a cramped hole; his shoulders touched the walls, he could not move about and could only come out late at night. But after a few months his wife bought her own house and Manuel, disguised as an old woman, shuffled down the street to his new hideout where he had the upstairs floor and could sleep in his own bed—though he had to be sure that Juliana did not become pregnant. He occupied himself with binding up *esparto* grass, reading pulp magazines, staring out the crack of a window and listening to the news broadcasts. He was in constant danger of discovery, for his old political enemies put pressure on the Guardia Civil to interrogate his wife and search her house, but it is noteworthy that even in 1939 the Guardia correctly obeyed legal procedure and never bullied or harmed Juliana.

But there were some terrifying moments: they were almost trapped by an extortionist; the house nearly caught fire, Manuel was seen by children, who did not know who he was; and twice he was seriously ill, but recovered, once when his daughter, Maria, simulated his illness and received the necessary medicines. The responsibility for Manuel's survival devolved upon Juliana ("I never thought about anything else except about keeping him safe"), whose industry and self-sacrifice built up a small trade in eggs into a prosperous business with trucks and taxis; but there was also a great emotional strain on Maria, who suffered a childhood of silence, confusion and terror, manifested in her compulsive vomiting. Maria had to withhold the secret even from her *novio*, until after the wedding, which Manuel glimpsed crouching down at the keyhole: "For a father not to be present at his daughter's wedding—that's a sad thing to happen to a man." And when the grandchildren came, they too were schooled in silence and were never told the real name of their *abuelo*.

Manuel's endless calm and his bravery under the threat of death are extremely impressive, for even in his worst moments of despair he was too proud to give himself up. Toward the end of his concealment he planned an escape by boat, but at the last moment his contact was accidentally killed. Though Manuel inevitably came to look upon himself as a prisoner, he was entirely innocent: his only "crime" was being a Socialist. He was a firm supporter of the Republican regime but was realistic and even critical about the factionalism and ineptitude that failed to eliminate the terrible legacy of the Spanish monarchy: the poverty, illiteracy and *caciques* or political bosses who not only "ate" the town's money but even dominated the *plaza* ("Only he and his *camarilla* could be there, no one else would dare stay, let alone go into the bar where they were"). During his year as mayor Manuel concentrated on practical measures: the construction of a road to Malaga (in those days it was a remote place that required a twelve-hour journey) and the installation of a telephone line. He saved religious objects from the burning churches ("Saints don't do harm to anyone"), and twice he personally prevented a massacre of Right-wing landlords by the marauding Anarchist militia. Yet some of those who had been saved by him sought his life after the war.

When at last Manuel came out of hiding the world he knew had disappeared: tourists had brought an enormous prosperity to the province, and the men had left the land. The village was jubilant at his return, his resurrection really, which seemed to symbolize the healing of old wounds. Juliana restrained her anger about the hunger and fear and misfortunes that comprised "half a lifetime that has passed, bitterly." But Manuel remained an affirming flame, though he was disillusioned by the apolitical and pleasure-seeking modern youths, and chastised his friends who did nothing to teach their children about their beliefs: "when you die, what's going to remain?" Manuel's legacy is exemplary: nothing less than the patience, devotion, loyalty and courage of the ordinary man, which transcends the violence of contemporary politics.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 341)

nant" of Americans who have stood firmly against this evil—and against the other Nixon military and social priorities that are clearly quite acceptable to Novak and the Coalition—can once more be frozen out of the political process as America "Comes Home" again to Hubert Humphrey, George Meany, and Henry Jackson.

EDWARD S. HERMAN
University of Pennsylvania

Tougaloo, Miss.

To the Editors: Mr. Michael Novak argues, correctly I am sure, that an explanation of Nixon's victory based on white racism is oversimplified [Dec. 15]. But it seems that he would go further, suggesting that racism was not really an issue at all. His remarks about the rougher, more genuine, more serious estimate of the personal qualities of individual Blacks, which supposedly characterize working-class whites rather than intellectuals, are certainly true to my experience.

But Mr. Novak takes off from there into political fantasy. First, many intellectuals, including many left liberals, are pretty thoroughly racist. The affirmative action programs, favorable quotas, etc., of which he complains are for the most part a grudging, poorly kept up facade behind which most businesses, universities, foundations, and government departments keep up their ordinary near-exclusionist practices. Where the administrative elite of this country has acted to integrate their own ranks, or the student and apprentice ranks from which they are recruited, it has been almost solely under legal compulsion. Now that definite structures exist to further integration, it is possible, and to be hoped, that they will maintain some momentum of their own, benefiting at last by the inertia against which those who believe in a color-blind society so long struggled. But with Mr. Nixon's present stranglehold control of government activities in this area, it is only too likely that racism, institutional and personal, will find its formerly waning strength renewed. Mr. Novak can find the proof of the active racism of his and my academic peers in John Sekora's important article, "Murder Relentless and Impassive: the American Academic Community and the Negro College" (*Soundings*, Fall, 1968).

Second, the white working class is without question politically and socially racist; the manly independence of judgment which so many of them display in personal relationships is transformed into hard-hat riots, Wallace votes, exclusionist union policies, housebombings in Cicero and elsewhere, etc., whenever the short-term interest of the group is perceived to be at stake; and for most of them, "the group" is no specific European ethnic stock, but whiteness. Mr. Novak is entirely correct to point to the political fact that the urban working class is an essential component of any progressive force that can aspire to real power in America. The racism of that class, however, remains one of the most difficult obstacles to progressive power. It is specifically, unredeemably, and effectively anti-democratic; it works against the long-term interests of all working people; but no good is done by denying that the racism is there. Many members of urban white ethnic groups are, certainly, honorable exceptions to this generalization. But those exceptions carry few precincts and probably no elections.

Third, Mr. Novak believes "Ideology has replaced pragmatism. The day Jack and Bobby Kennedy made civil rights a 'moral issue' they set back the clock of steady advance by 50 years." Advance, one must ask, for whom, and toward what, and at what pace? I question, indeed, whether race relations were ever a moral issue for President Kennedy. Certainly his Administration did far less than it could have during the civil rights crisis, and did most of what it did with that head-scratching muddle, leisurely pace, and cunning eye for the (white) audience which we all learned from the sidemen at minstrel shows. But it seems clear from the history of the sixties that Mr. Novak's view is the exact opposite of the truth. Only while the civil rights struggle was perceived as a moral issue (I do not know why Mr. Novak puts these words in quotation marks), only while media presentations, governmental responses, Black leaders' strategies all employed the rhetoric of democratic ethics and Christian morality, was there a measure of mass support among whites for the recognition of Black rights. And only then were substantial advances, such as the ordinary Black man-in-the-street could experience in some numbers, begun. It was the persistence of this genuine moral urgency through a portion of President Johnson's time in office that saved the civil rights movement from total failure, at least temporarily.

Finally, it is interesting to learn that Mr. Novak thinks that in the Black ghettos, the "lord of the manor" role is enacted by whites as a game,

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and that those who engage in it are leftist leaders. Who does he think owns those buildings? What does he think is devouring those lives?

PHILIP O'MARA
Dept. of English
Tougaloo College

Abortion Figures

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: Re "Figures and Fetuses" by Richard J. Neuhaus [Nov. 24]. Of course superficiality is always in the eye of the beholder. Although I have changed jobs and am now working for the organization which is so favorably reviewed in the article, I would like to defend the survey that we made at WCBS. Mr. Neuhaus misses the essential point which has been argued, namely, should anyone who wants to have an abortion have access to an abortion. Although a person might not choose the abortion route —as apparently many would not, judging by the NBC survey—that same person might not want to stand in the way of somebody who would choose to have an abortion. That is certainly indicated not only by the CBS survey but by many others. Also I think Mr. Neuhaus is playing games with the numbers. The question from the NBC survey relating to the New York State law provided five alternatives as indicated by the following table:

	Abortion Decision
Woman Alone	20%
Woman and Doctor	15%
Woman and Husband	33%
Mother's Life in Danger	22%
Not Permitted	8%

It is obvious that the choice of woman and doctor is equivalent to woman alone. As for the third group, woman and husband does not apply to single women who account for many more than half of the abortions now being performed. Furthermore, requirement that the husband consent does not effectively invalidate the approval of access to abortion by those who want it. If I now do the arithmetic, which is not very difficult, I find that in the first three categories essentially 68 percent of the population in New York State approves the right of women to have access to abortion. This number is exactly—within the limits of error—equivalent to the figures that we obtained at WCBS TV. I would suggest to Mr. Neuhaus, considering the paragraph at the bottom of page 176 in the right hand column, that he read an elementary book on statistics.

EARL UBELL
Director,
Television News, N. Y.
NBC News

Reply

I am sure superficiality is not "always" anywhere. In this case, superficiality is in Mr. Ubell's original survey for CBS and in his response to my analysis of the NBC study. As I pointed out in my article, for CBS to poll people with the question, "Do you agree or disagree that a woman should be able to get a legal abortion in New

The Challenge to Congress

IT MAY BE premature to transfer the Congress from the political scientists to the cultural anthropologists for study, but our national legislature may be considered a marginal political institution, vulnerable to a final sacking by an American Cromwell. Worse still, few of its 535 members acknowledge, much less understand, the weakened congressional condition . . .

The nation has been on a war-footing for the last 30 years—with no end in sight. Along the way there has occurred both an intellectual and programmatic confusion between the roles of the President as Chief Executive and as Commander-in-Chief. Our Prince Metternich, Henry Kissinger, and his predecessors as Chief Counselor-of-State under Democratic Administrations take the view that only the Presidency is able properly to determine and execute foreign policy—and to this end, Congress as an institution is an impediment.

—from "The Pruning of the Presidency,"
by Wes Barthelmes
Commonweal January 21, 1972

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York State?" is superficial precisely because it evades the issue in the current debate, namely, *under what circumstances* a woman should be able to get an abortion. Repeating a superficiality makes it no more profound; thus Mr. Ubell's assertion that a majority "approves the right of women to have access to abortion" equally evades the issue.

I note that Mr. Ubell wisely does not attempt to defend his survey methods at CBS, except to argue that, however careless they were, they arrived at the same conclusion as that reached by NBC's more thorough survey—as Mr. Ubell interprets that survey.

Mr. Ubell's interpretation of the NBC findings is curious, although not impossible. In truth, none of us can know what was in the minds of the respondents. We do know how they responded to specific options posed. Mr. Ubell may think the second option ('Woman and Doctor") is the same as the first, but the fact is that 15 percent of the respondents chose the second rather than the first. Mr. Ubell may think the "Woman and Husband" choice is inadequate, and he may be right, but the fact is that 33 percent chose it nonetheless. Mr. Ubell, in short, seems peculiarly prone to an unscientific confusion of speculations and hard findings, a propensity that hardly qualifies him to offer advice about the reading of statistics. (I trust Mr. Ubell's move from CBS to NBC does not mean he is taking over the latter's public opinion research.)

The hard fact is that only one of the five choices ("Woman Alone") represents the present New York State law on abortions. Mr. Ubell's unhappiness with the data notwithstanding, the fact remains as I originally stated it: "While 20 percent favor the present law, 30 percent approve the prior or a more strict law." Despite the findings ot fhe NBC survey and despite the crushing defeat in November referendums in North Dakota and Michigan, the proposition that an overwhelming majority of Americans approves abortion-on-demand apparently remains an article of faith for pro-abortionists in the media and elsewhere. In the interests of their own strategy they would do well to divest themselves of this illusion. In the interests of truth and of ecumenical understanding they would do well to abandon the line that the general will is being thwarted by a small group of obstructionist Roman Catholic hierarchs and their minions.

I fail to understand the reference to the last paragraph on page 176. The statement there, that "blacks were much less in favor of abortion than whites," is not mine but is quoted from the NBC report itself. Were I to add my own comment, it would be that, in view of the evidence, the remark about the difference between black and white attitudes on abortion is something of an understatement.

RICHARD J. NEUHAUS

Abortion & Votes

Birmingham, Mich.

To the Editors: Much that was revealed during Michigan's recent attempt to legalize abortion-on-demand up to 20 weeks, is confirmed by Richard Neuhaus' "Figures & Fetuses" [Nov. 24]. Unfortunately, the results of this significant election have been almost completely ignored by the media, including *Time, Life* and the *N.Y. Times.* The silence of the media on the unexpected 62 percent defeat of Proposal B would be incomprehensible if past performances on the abortion issue were not so maddeningly similar.

Of Michigan's 83 counties, only 2 voted "Yes" on the abortion proposal. One is dominated by University of Michigan students and faculty and went for George McGovern. The other is chiefly affluent suburbia, and voted for Richard Nixon. Both counties are predominantly white. Blacks and the poor, women, married people, the elderly, and Democrats made up the greatest opposition to abortion legalization. Whites, upper income people, men, the unmarried, voters under 30, and Republicans generally favored Proposal B. A large majority of Catholics (25 percent of the state's population), a lesser majority of Protestants, and approximately one-fifth of Jews voted "No" on November 7.

Pastor Neuhaus' observations, along with Michigan's election figures and population groupings serve to break down some of the ridiculous stereotypes so dear to the hearts of those who control the printed and spoken word. For example: which side in the abortion debate best represents the voice of the establishment and which side the voice of minorities and the people?

PATRICIA NIXON

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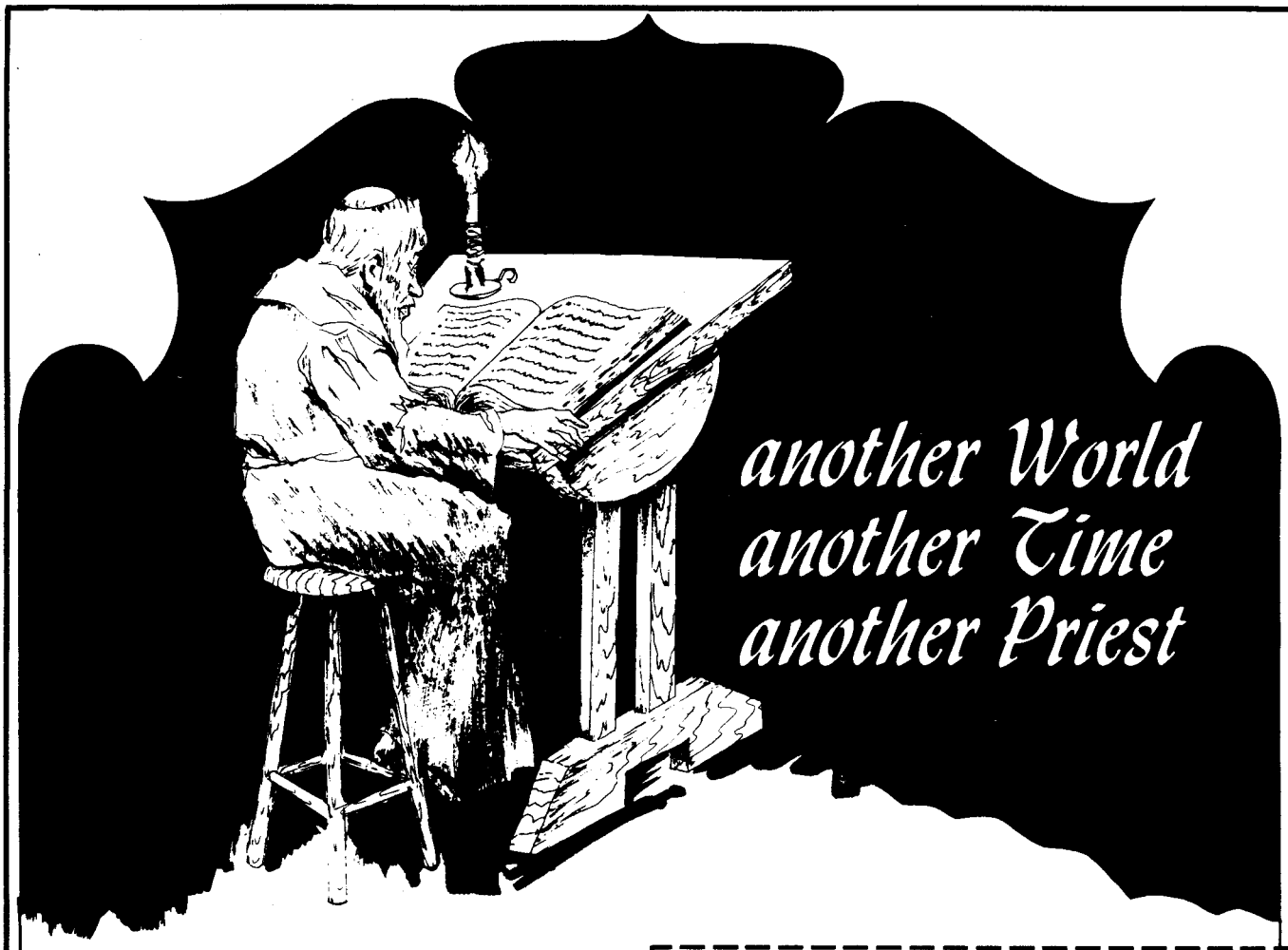

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